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A HISTORY

OF

MASSACHUSETTS IN THE CIVIL WAR.

3967

BY

WILLIAM SCHOULER,

LATE ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

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TO

MRS. HARRISON GRAY OTIS,

OF BOSTON;

WHOSE GRACIOUS DEEDS AND KIND WORDS, WHOSE UNREMITTING CHRISTIAN AND
PATRIOTIC SERVICES IN BEHALF OF THE SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
OF MASSACHUSETTS AND OF THEIR FAMILIES DURING
THE LATE CIVIL WAR,

AND

WHOSE HEROIC SELF-DEVOTION TO THE TRUE INTERESTS OF THE NATION IN THE
YEARS OF ITS GREATEST PERIL, HAVE MADE THE NAME OF OTIS AS
INSEPARABLE FROM THE CAUSE OF THE UNION AND THE
CONSTITUTION AS FROM THE COLONIAL STRUGGLE
FOR FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR,

WILLIAM SCHOULER.

P R E F A C E.

IN the Preface to the first volume of this work, published in 1868, I gave a conditional promise to write two additional volumes ; one to be devoted exclusively to the three-years regiments and batteries, and one to the meetings held in the several cities and towns in the Commonwealth, "to encourage recruiting, to raise money, and to provide for the support and sustenance of the families of the soldiers." The present volume is in part a fulfilment of that conditional promise, and is devoted exclusively to the intense and unwearied devotion of the entire people of the Commonwealth, regardless of sex or party, to the cause of the country during the whole period of the Rebellion. The third volume, if it should be written, would complete the entire scope of my original design ; namely, three volumes, — the first devoted to what was done by the Commonwealth as a State, the second to the cities and towns, and the third to the three-years regiments and batteries while at the front, as exhibited by the reports, letters, and other material on file at the State House, and obtained from private sources, of which there is a vast accumulation. As evidence of this, there are in the State House eighty volumes of correspondence, each volume containing five hundred pages, written by Governor Andrew during the war ; and eighty-three volumes, or upwards of forty-one thousand pages, of correspondence written by the Adjutant General dur-

ing the same period, and containing upwards of thirty-five thousand letters, upon every conceivable subject having relation directly or indirectly to the war. These letters were written, in a majority of cases, in reply to letters and reports received from officers and enlisted men at the front, from the city and town authorities, and from the families of soldiers in the Commonwealth. The letters written by Governor Andrew, and reports made by his personal staff, were freely used in the first volume of this work, as also in part those written by the Adjutant General and Surgeon General. But the letters and reports received from the front, from our regiments and batteries, which are on file at the State House, and which contain a vast amount of interesting and important facts and details, are the principal storehouse from which the historian would draw in writing the third volume.

The Adjutant General's Reports during the years of the war give a separate, distinct, and correct narrative of each regiment and battery from the day it left the State until it returned; so that a person having a complete set of the reports will have no difficulty in following each command from the beginning to the close of its gallant service. These narratives were necessarily bare outlines of marches, battles, and camp life. The reports and letters on file at the State House, and the thousands of private and unofficial letters at hand, would furnish ample material to fill up these outlines and give to them a compact and symmetrical form.

My purpose has been to make each volume of this history distinct and complete of itself. This volume, as I have in another place remarked, contains the war proceedings of what Mr. Webster called "the small assemblies of the towns." They show the unanimity and fervor which everywhere pervaded their deliberations, as well as the liberality, sound judgment, and undaunted patriotism which characterized their action. They show that

Massachusetts was the same "in town-meeting assembled" as she was at the front and on the sea, in the halls of her State Legislature, in the halls of Congress, and in the Council Chamber of her GREAT EXECUTIVE.

In presenting this volume to the public, I would state that it is the result of nearly three years of incessant and often perplexed labor; and that my constant aim, from the inception of the work until its completion, was to be truthful and accurate. I hope that in both respects I have been moderately successful, although perfect accuracy, under all the circumstances attending the collection, examination and analysis of very large masses of original manuscripts, was barely possible.

To the city and town clerks, selectmen, treasurers, and others who have assisted me in the collection of material from which this book has in a great part been written, I tender my sincere acknowledgments.

That the book may be favorably received by the sons and daughters of Massachusetts, and add to the respect entertained for our Commonwealth by good and true people everywhere, is my sincere desire.

WILLIAM SCHOULER.

Boston, September, 1871.

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CIVIL AND MILITARY HISTORY

OF

MASSACHUSETTS IN THE REBELLION.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY AND EXPLANATORY.

OFTEN during the four years of the late civil war we were reminded of the words of Mr. Webster in a speech made by him in the Massachusetts Convention of 1820 for the amendment of the Constitution of this Commonwealth. They are as follows : —

“ I would not be thought to be among those who underrate the value of military service. My heart beats, I trust, as responsive as any one's to a soldier's claim for honor or renown. It has ever been my opinion, however, that, while celebrating the military achievements of our countrymen in the Revolutionary contest, we have not always done equal justice to the merits and the sufferings of those who sustained, in their property and in their means of subsistence, the great burden of the war. Any one who has had occasion to be acquainted with the records of the New-England towns knows well how to estimate those merits and those sufferings. Nobler records of patriotism exist nowhere. Nowhere can there be found higher proofs of a spirit that was ready to hazard all, to pledge all, to sacrifice all, in the cause of the country. Instances were not unfrequent in which small freeholders parted with their last hoof, and last measure of corn from their granaries, to supply provisions for the troops, and hire service for the ranks. The voice of OTIS and of ADAMS, in Faneuil Hall, found its full and true echo in the little councils of the interior towns : and, if within

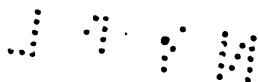
the Continental Congress patriotism shone more conspicuously, it did not there exist more truly, nor burn more fervently; it did not render the day more anxious, nor the night more sleepless; it sent up no more ardent prayer to God for succor; and it put forth in no greater degree the fulness of its effort, and the energy of its whole soul and spirit, in the common cause,—than it did in the small assemblies of the towns.”

We read these words long years ago; and they had become, as it were, fastened upon our memory before the late civil contest had assumed a warlike front. We believed that they presented a true state of facts respecting the Revolutionary period, as we know that they possess a marvellous accuracy when applied to “the small assemblies of the towns” of Massachusetts during the late Rebellion.

In what we shall say on this or any other point, no one, we trust, will understand us as asserting that too much credit has been awarded to the soldiers of the Union army for the services they have performed, or too much sympathy and honor been given them for the sufferings they have endured, and the sacrifices they have made; for, in our judgment, they have not received their full award of credit, nor their full share of sympathy and honor.

The purpose of this volume is to present a compact and faithful record of what our towns did, during the late war, to aid the cause with which the future name and well-being of this nation were so closely allied; and also to preserve, and rescue from neglect, the names of gentlemen whose official positions imposed upon them many new and untried duties, which they performed with an energy unsurpassed, and a faithfulness which merits the thankful acknowledgment of all good people.

We are not aware that a volume of a character precisely like this has ever before been written. Although the material for such a work, showing the action of the local town governments during the Revolutionary war, may still exist in the archives of many of our towns, yet we fear that, in the lapse of years which now separate us from that memorable period, many of the records have become mutilated, and in some instances totally or entirely lost. No systematic attempt, to our know-



edge, was ever made to gather them together, combine them in a volume, and present them in an intelligible and compact form for the information of the general public, or for the more limited purpose of being used by the lover of antiquarian research, or the student of American Revolutionary history. Had they been, we believe they would in a remarkable degree have sustained the opinion expressed by Mr. Webster in the extract from the speech which we have quoted at the commencement of this chapter, and to which, in a great part, this volume owes its origin.

But, whatever matters of historical interest the town records of the Revolutionary era may contain, they must be deficient in many important and interesting facts which are intimately connected with those of our own, and which will be found in the pages of this volume, but not in so full and perfect a manner as we could have wished, yet sufficiently full to give the reader an intelligent idea of what was done. And in this regard we would refer in an especial manner to the services rendered and the work performed by the women of Massachusetts in behalf of the soldiers. The women of the Revolution did much, and doubtless had the will to have done more; but they did not possess the means, either pecuniary or practical, which the women of our day possessed. In their day the railroad and the telegraph were unknown; yet to these agencies we are indebted, not only for the rapid transportation of our soldiers and the early transmission of important information during the late war, but in a primary degree for the Christian and Sanitary Commissions, and the local auxiliary associations which were organized in almost every city and town in Massachusetts, and, we may add, by nearly every religious society in the Commonwealth. These auxiliary societies, adopting in most instances the appropriate name of "Soldiers' Aid Societies," were composed entirely of patriotic and Christian women; and their purpose was to furnish medicines, delicacies, underclothing, books, newspapers, and other useful material for the bodily and spiritual comfort of the sick and wounded in the hospitals, and for the healthy and able-bodied on the battle-field and in the camp. The value and extent of these contributions can never

properly be estimated in dollars and cents, nor can the good which they were the means of accomplishing ever be accurately known on earth. These works are as treasures laid up in heaven.

Without the means of transportation afforded by the railroads, and the transmission of important information by the telegraph, these invaluable organisms would probably never have existed. We are not aware that any of a similar character were formed during the war of the Revolution; and, if any were formed, they would have been almost entirely inoperative, on account of the want of ready transportation, and the impossibility of receiving timely information of the casualties resulting from a great battle. They were, however, valuable auxiliaries to the good cause all through the late Rebellion. A battle was no sooner fought than it was known through the land; and as soon as known, and ere the smoke of the conflict had disappeared, and the wounded been taken to the hospitals, materials of every useful description, with volunteer surgeons and nurses, were in rapid transmission to the places where they were most needed.

We have taken much pains, during the last four years, to garner up all the information possible to be obtained respecting these local organizations, scattered throughout our ancient Commonwealth, from Barnstable to Berkshire; and, although we have been successful to a reasonable extent, we have not accomplished all that we have desired. We have, however, probably gathered in the bulk of the crop, so widespread and so nourishing; but there is left standing in the field unseen, alone, something for the gleaner yet to do. And we apprehend that, however much may have been gathered, and may hereafter be, much that was done will never be fully known; for in many instances no written records were kept, and in others those that were kept have perished from the earth. The labor performed was so much one of love and duty, that it is remembered only as a satisfaction by those by whom it was performed; a thing which brought its own reward, in thus having contributed, — however much or however little, yet something, — in these long years of war and suffering, towards rendering the

soldier's sick-bed less hard, and the pains of his wounded limb less poignant.

It is not necessary for us to speak, in this place, more in detail of what was done by the women of Massachusetts in forwarding contributions to the New-England Sanitary Commission, or to the institution for soldiers' relief which, during the whole of the war, was watched over and superintended by that distinguished and accomplished lady, Mrs. HARRISON GRAY OTIS, to whom we have the honor to dedicate this book, as we have spoken of them as they deserve in the first volume of this work. A few facts, however, concerning the Massachusetts Christian Commission would not be out of place, as no especial reference was made to it in our previous publication. It was through this and the Sanitary Commission that a large part of the contributions made by the women of the Commonwealth found their way to the army and to the hospitals, and were properly distributed; but the Christian Commission received large benefactions likewise from men, as well as from the women, as the following brief abstract of its doings will abundantly prove.

The work of the Christian Commission in Massachusetts was under the charge of Charles Demond, Esq., of Boston. He devoted a large portion of his time during the war to this work, in the performance of which he visited many of our towns, addressed assemblages of the people, and organized local societies. In the Young Men's Christian Association of Boston he found a vigorous and useful ally. The receiving-ship at the Charlestown Navy Yard, where upwards of twenty-six thousand enlisted sailors were received during the war, was regularly visited by members of the Association, and articles of comfort and reading matter were distributed. They also held religious meetings every night on board the ship. The camps at Readville and at Gallop's Island were visited for similar purposes.

The amount of money received by the Treasurer of the Commission at Boston was \$330,197.86; and at Springfield, \$33,553.17. In addition to these amounts, more than \$15,000 were sent direct from Massachusetts to the office of the Commission at Philadelphia, — thus making the total amount of

money contributed by Massachusetts to the Commission, during the war, \$378,751.03 ; besides which, the value of sanitary and other stores contributed by the people of the State to the Commission amounted to \$500,240.00, — making a total of eight hundred and seventy-eight thousand nine hundred and ninety-one dollars and three cents (\$878,991.03). These large sums were not received from fairs and other similar appliances, but were free-will offerings made by the people of the Commonwealth in response to appeals through the newspapers and by public addresses from members and friends of the cause.

On three several occasions, — after the battle of Gettysburg in July, 1863, after the battle of the Wilderness in May, 1864, and after the fall of Richmond in April, 1865, — Mr. Demond, Mr. Edward S. Tobey, and some other members of the Army Committee of the Christian Commission, sat in the Merchants' Exchange, in Boston, and received the voluntary offerings of the people. No one was asked to give ; every cent received was a free gift. And the result was as follows : on the first occasion, thirty-five thousand dollars ; on the second, sixty thousand dollars ; and on the third, thirty thousand dollars, — making an aggregate of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. This large amount was made up of comparatively small sums. Only one was as large as a thousand dollars ; the others varied from that down to ten cents.

One day, while receiving contributions, immediately after the battle of Gettysburg, information was received of the fall of Vicksburg. The despatch containing the information was written on the blackboard, and was in these words : —

Vicksburg has surrendered.

U. S. GRANT.

Instantly shouts of joy went up from the assembled merchants. When the immediate excitement had subsided, they joined with uncovered heads in singing, —

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

At the conclusion of the hymn, some one remarked, "Let us show our gratitude by our gifts." The persons present imme-

diately crowded around the table of the committee; and offers of money were made faster than it could be received. Remarks like these were frequently made: "This is my thank-offering." — "We must take care of the boys who fight for us." — "If you want any more, call on me." Contributions soon began to come in to the committee by mail from different parts of the Commonwealth, and continued coming until one hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars were received. The employés in the Charlestown Navy Yard sent in a collection amounting to \$6,432.26; and it is related that "an old lady of eighty years, who lived in Amherst, and supported herself by sewing, walked four miles to carry to her pastor five cents, that he might send it to aid the suffering soldiers." Several instances are mentioned in these pages of aged women who spent the working hours of each day in knitting socks and mittens for the soldiers, and of young girls who gave their leisure time to scraping lint and making bandages for use in the hospitals. Many of the unfortunate inmates of our lunatic asylums made up underclothing, and otherwise labored in behalf of the Union soldiers; and several cases are related, in the first volume of this work, of schoolboys who spent their vacations in picking berries in the woods and pastures, which they sold, and forwarded the entire proceeds to the Christian and Sanitary Commissions. In view of these and many other facts which are related in these pages, it may well be said that when the rich and the poor, the aged and the middle-aged, the youth and children of both sexes, the sound in mind and those whom God hath suffered to be afflicted, unite as one in the support of a great cause, it cannot be otherwise than just, and cannot fail in the end to be successful.

The chief purpose of this volume, however, is to show what was done by each of the cities and towns in this Commonwealth, in their corporate capacities, to recruit and sustain our armies in the field, and to provide for the comfortable maintenance of the families of the soldiers and sailors when absent, and, when disabled, after their return home. To do this correctly, and to make each record complete, we believed it proper, as it was most certainly just, that the names of the gentlemen who were Mayors, Aldermen, Clerks, and Treasurers of our cities, and